

SCOIL SAN EOIN ATTENDANCE POLICY



User

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance by pupils at school is key to educational attainment and success and must be actively encouraged within the school environment. Our school aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all pupils – furthermore we seek to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing problems with attendance at school. Formal and informal structures are in place in our school to monitor report and evaluate patterns of on-attendance amongst pupils. The provisions of the Education Welfare Act (2000) inform and support the policy on attendance.

RATIONALE

Scoil San Eoin decided to review its attendance policy because:

- It is a priority area identified by the parents/guardians/pupils/staff/others.
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000.
- School needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance.
- Statement of Strategy for School Attendance needs reviewing.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

- Scoil San Eoin has a Catholic Ethos, promotes Irish language and culture, is caring-centred and respects different colours, creeds and intellect.
- Every pupil is encouraged to achieve his/her full potential – socially, personally and intellectually – in a happy, secure learning environment.
- The discipline in our school encourages and fosters respect and self-esteem among the pupils.
- We endeavour to develop supportive and open communication among pupils, teachers, parents/guardians, Board of Management and the community.
- We aim to have a staff that will continue to be committed, progressive and creative.

AIMS

- To promote an ethos of regular attendance and punctuality in the school.
- To share the promotion of school attendance amongst Board of Management, Principal, teaching staff, support staff, parents/guardians and the whole school community.
- To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Educational Welfare Act.
- To identify pupils who may be at risk due to poor or irregular school attendance.
- To ensure that the school has a procedure in place to promote attendance, and to address problems relating to punctuality and attendance.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school.
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines form NEWB.

DEFINITION OF NON ATTENDANCE

We define non-attendance as when a child is not in attendance when the school is open. Our cut off time for calling the Roll is 10.30am daily. If a pupil arrives after that time, they are marked absent. When a pupil provides a note detailing a valid reason prior to their absence at Roll time, and under the discretion of the class teacher on condition that the pupil is present for two thirds of the school day, will be marked in present.

ATTENDANCE/PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 Section 17, parents/guardians are legally obliged to cause their child to attend school.

ATTENDANCE/PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Scoil San Eoin therefore records the attendance of all students every day, the school is open and this includes the recording of non- school attendance due to illness or any other absences by class teachers.

Under Section 18 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 parents are also obliged to notify the school of the reason for the child's absenteeism.

PARENTAL STRATEGIES TO HELP FOSTER AN APPRECIATION OF LEARNING AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Parents/guardians are required to allow their child to stay in school for the duration of the whole school day. They are discouraged from collecting pupils before 2.00/3.00pm unless an unavoidable circumstance arises.
- Parents/guardians must provide an **email/phonecall** of explanation for any early collection of pupils.
- In the case of any serious irregular absenteeism the NEWB is informed and after consulting with the principal, the Deputy-Principal informs the parents/guardians of this by letter.
- The school calendar is issued at the beginning of the school year. Parents/guardians are informed of all school closures through email/text message as they occur throughout the year.
- When a child returns to school after a period of absence, **an email must be sent to the school office and/or the class teacher** detailing the dates of absence and the reason for the absence.
- Should a child be absent due to illness for three days or longer, the school may request a medical certificate.
- Should a child be absent frequently due to recurring illness or a specific medical condition, parents are required to supply a medical certificate to this effect to the school.
- These **emails** will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.

SCOIL SAN EOIN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGIES/PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM

Scoil San Eoin has now put school procedures in place for dealing with a pupil's school absenteeism where:

1. A student has been absent for more than 10 days in a school year.
2. A student has regular or persistent unexplained absences.
3. School absences where the reason given is considered unsatisfactory.

SCOIL SAN EOIN'S ATTENDANCE STRATEGY TO MOTIVATE AND PREVENT SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM – SCHOOL EFFORT CERTIFICATION STRATEGY

- Positive affirmation of school attendance at the Roll call each morning.
- **Whole school rewards re: attendance – i.e. attendance awards at the end of year. Certificates and book tokens will be issued to pupils who have been present the most amount of days in each class. (This will return post Covid)**
- **At the end of each school year, a special Plaque will be awarded to the pupil in Sixth class who has the most school days present in their class since Junior Infants.**

SCOIL SAN EOIN ATTENDANCE STRATEGY FOR PUPILS WITH PROBLEMATIC ABSENTEEISM – EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGY

- Standardised letters to be sent by the school at 10 days absent and again at 15, or more days absent. See Appendix one (standard letter).
- Parent/guardian is requested by the school to attend a meeting in the school after 15 days absent.
- If no improvement in the attendance after this school meeting, a referral to the NEWB is considered
- Deputy Principal to oversee the early intervention and sending of standardised letters.
- **Note: the above absence procedure is not in operation for school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 due to COVID restrictions. The necessity for children to isolate/restrict movements along with the good practise of children staying at home when showing any symptoms, however minor, has led to higher absence rates than other school years. The school made the decision not to send these reminder letters**

to parents as these absences are unavoidable and the school is very grateful for the continued support of parents in keeping our school community safe.

- Positive affirmation of attendance each day in the classroom.
- Standard agenda of school attendance on all BOM meetings through the Principal's report and regular review of overall school's absenteeism with school Principal & Deputy Principal.

SCOIL SAN EOIN ATTENDANCE STRATEGY FOR PUPILS WITH CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM – CORE TARGET GROUP STRATEGY

- Individual pupil referral form completed for each pupil with chronic absenteeism to NEWB for structured work regarding absenteeism.
- Integrated service work by the NEWB, SCP, HSCL and the School on pupils that are part of the referral list or Core Target Group of the school.
- Possible issue of a School Attendance Notice and court prosecution if no significant improvement made 24 weeks after initial referral received by the NEWB.

SCOIL SAN EOIN ATTENDANCE STRATEGY TO INCLUDE PARENTS/GUARDIANS PARENTAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Parents/guardians updated yearly of the school's School Attendance Policy through the Parents Association/class reps.
- At Parent/Teacher meetings, parents/guardians are informed about their child/ren attendance.
- The end of year progress reports contain a section for reporting to parents/guardians on attendance and absences.
- Clear communication regarding the work involved in each attendance strategy.
- Use of Aladdin will remind parents via text to follow all absenteeism with a written **note/email**.
- Parental support requested towards the attendance effort certification of the school.

PUNCTUALITY

School is open from 9:20am to 3:00pm. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time in order that formal instruction can begin promptly. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of

pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Educational Welfare Act to report children who are persistently late to the National Educational Welfare Board or the HSE. The school stresses the importance of punctuality at enrolment, parent teacher meetings and in newsletters.

MONITORING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND REPORTING ABSENCES

- All teachers have access to Aladdin and record their classes daily attendance.
- The roll is called every morning before 10:30am
- Regular school attendance is actively promoted by teachers.
- Pupil absence from school is monitored by class teacher and recorded by the Deputy Principal.
- Pupil's parents/guardians are contacted by phone after 3 days of unexplained absence. **In school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 the school may contact parents/guardians sooner than three days to gain an explanation in line with COVID guidelines.**

TO COMPLY WITH THE EDUCATION WELFARE ACT THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WILL BE RESPECTED

- A note/email must be sent to the school office and/or the class teacher explaining the reason for absence for part or whole of any school day. All absences must be accounted for.
- These notes/emails will be kept on file as record of absences in the filing cabinet located in the office
- Any student who is absent for more than 20 school days (irrespective of reason) will be reported to the National Education Welfare Officer.
- The Deputy Principal is informed of a child's absence, if unexplained, after 3 days.
- Children reminded of the importance of good attendance so as to achieve the maximum benefit from their education.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff members have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teacher's record individual patterns of attendance and the Deputy Principal prepares returns to the NEWB. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for

observing attendance on Aladdin and contacting other schools as the need arises.

WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ATTENDANCE

Environment:

As a school, within the classroom, we strive to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Late arrivals are asked to explain and are encouraged to be on time. (On arrival every parent/guardian has to sign the Late Arrival Book). Children are welcomed warmly even when late as this is an issue to be resolved with parents/guardians.

Early intervention:

New mothers/fathers are informed of procedures in relation to attendance and the importance of attendance.

Reports:

We report the total amount of days missed in a year to parents/guardians in the end of year reports and at parent/teacher meetings.

Parents/Guardians:

We communicate the requirements of schools and of parents/guardians under the Education Welfare Act to parents/guardians on enrolment.

Support:

We liaise with supporting agencies including the NEWB and Tulsa.

PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO THE REMOVAL FROM REGISTER/TRANSFER FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL

The principal may only remove a pupil's name from a school register where they have been informed in writing that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out of- school education.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS/OTHER PROVIDERS

- When a child transfers to another school, school's records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into Scoil San Eoin, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.

STRATEGIES IN EVENT OF NON ATTENDANCE

(The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register)

- Parents/guardians are made aware of their statutory duties outlined in Education Welfare Act in relation to causing their children to attend school. Refer to *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* (leaflet for parents NEWB 2004) (Appendix 1).
- Parents/guardians are made aware of the schools duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the Education Welfare Officer. A "school attendance notice" may be served by the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents/guardians and the principal of the school) on any parent who they conclude is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school.
- This will set out the possible consequence of a successful case being taken against the parent/guardian (fine and/or imprisonment)
- If the Class Teacher has any concerns about non-attendance he/she discusses the issue with the pupil.
- The Class Teacher informs the Deputy Principal.
- Increased attendance rates.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The practical indicators of the success of this policy include:

- An increase in attendance levels as shown in school records.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and Education Welfare Board.
- A decrease in the number of pupils recorded as having more than 20 days absent.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This statement will be made available at the school office on request.

- Appendix 1 – *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* leaflet**
- Appendix 2 - Scoil San Eoin standardised school letter**
- Appendix 3 - EDUCATION (WELFARE) ACT 2000**

The following extracts taken from the above act are binding on all schools:

1. *'The parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognized school on each school day....'*
2. *'Where the child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of the school day or more than a school day, the parent of such a child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the code of behaviour prepared by the school ... notify the principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence'*
3. *'The Principal of a recognised school shall cause to be maintained in respect of each school year a record of the attendance or non-attendance of each student on each school day of each student registered at the school...'*
4. *'A record maintained shall specify ... where a student fails to attend, the fact of his or her failure and the reasons for such failure...'*
5. *'A record shall be maintained where the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during the school year is not less than 20 ...'*

The National Education Welfare Board is the national agency established to ensure that every child attends school regularly or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil San Eoin on _____ . It will then be circulated to each teacher. It will then also be made available on the school website.

Signed:

Ms. Caroline Mooney

Chairperson

Date: _____

Ms. Linda Greene

Principal

Date: _____